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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 001229

SIPDIS

NOFORN

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP  
LONDON FOR ETHAN GOLDRICH

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SUBJECT: IRAQI AMBASSADOR PROCLAIMS ALLAWI VISIT A SUCCESS

REF: MANAMA 1228

Classified By: CDA Susan Ziadeh, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

(C/NF) 1. SUMMARY: In an August 4 meeting with CDA, Iraqi Ambassador to Bahrain Ghassan Hussein stressed Bahrain's great show of solidarity with Iraq, a stance also underscored in positive GoB-sanctioned local media reports. According to the Ambassador, Iraqi PM Allawi's unannounced seven-hour stop in Bahrain on August 2 was to discuss with the King and Prime Minister Bahrain's support for Iraq's security and stability through training and investment, while ministers in the delegation held bilateral meetings with their Bahraini counterparts. Iraq and Bahrain continue to cooperate on finance training, and will add civil defense training soon. He noted that Bahrain may have backpedaled on a offer to send Bahraini Naval support, suggesting instead to provide training in Bahrain for Iraqi naval forces. The Ambassador concluded saying Bahrain and Iraq pledged to encourage private sector investment initiatives to support Iraq's reconstruction. END SUMMARY.

(C/NF) 2. Iraqi Ambassador to Bahrain Ghassan Hussein provided CDA with a read-out of the Allawi visit. The Iraqi Ambassador said he capitalized on his 40-year friendship with his high school classmate Allawi to convince the Iraqi Prime Minister to visit Bahrain at the last minute. The large Iraqi delegation included the Ministers of Defense, Transport, Telecommunications, Oil, and State as well as the Governor of the Central Bank (a regular visitor to Bahrain), the Assistant Director of Intelligence, the Deputy Foreign Minister and the Deputy Finance Minister. Ambassador Hussein noted that members of the delegation held separate bilateral talks with their Bahraini counterparts, meetings not mentioned in press reports.

(C/NF) 3. Ambassador Hussein said that the GOB is eager to provide assistance to Iraq, particularly in the form of training. Bahrain has already begun providing financial sector training to Iraqi bankers, and he indicated that an MOU regarding training for 4000 Iraqi firefighters would soon be approved by the Iraqi Minister of Interior. On security, Ambassador Hussein noted that the GOB may be rethinking sending naval forces to help secure Iraqi waters as offered one month ago, and is proposing instead to provide naval training in Bahrain for Iraqi naval forces. While the Ambassador did not elaborate on Allawi's discussion with the King and Prime Minister for troop support (reftel), he reiterated Allawi's position that coalition forces must remain until Iraqi security capacities can be ensured. Above all, Ambassador Hussein told CDA, Allawi stressed that Iraq needs continued moral support from Muslim countries and thanked Bahrain for its stance since the end of the old regime.

(C/NF) 4. On economic issues, PM Allawi's message is that private investment is key to Iraq's reconstruction. Iraq and Bahrain are organizing channels of bilateral commercial cooperation to provide potential Bahraini investors with the ways and means to get involved. To encourage private sector interest, Iraq is sending its Minister of Water Resources, and possibly its Minister of Electricity to Bahrain in conjunction with the Power-Gen Middle East and Water Middle East Conference in September.

ZIADEH